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example, they describe an adolescent girl as one whose breasts are beginning to grow.

The Kwoma class a person as an infant as long as he still suckles. He remains in this category from two to four years, depending upon various contingencies such as his health or the birth of a younger sibling.[9] The weaning period, the transition between infancy and childhood, lasts from one to two years. A Kwoma is usually somewhere between four and six years of age before he is established as a child. The childhood category for boys runs from the end of weaning to the first initiation into the age-grade cycle, which roughly coincides with pubescence. A girl enters adolescence with the ceremony that is held at first menstruation. The period of adolescence extends from the end of childhood to a ceremony in which the boy or the girl is cicatrized. This takes place at about sixteen or seventeen, usually just before marriage for the boy and just after marriage for the girl. All persons who have been cicatrized are classified as adults.[10]

In addition to the maturation hierarchy, there is a system of age grades. A boy is initiated into the first of the four grades at adolescence, and into each of the next higher grades at approximately five-year intervals thereafter. While he is a member of each grade, he is permitted to wear a type of hair ornament which symbolizes his position.

In addition to the categories based on kinship, locality, and age, the Kwoma divide themselves into a variety of groups for the purpose of carrying out economic activities. A brother and sister before they are married, or a husband and wife after marriage, constitute a team to extract sago flour. The households of two or more brothers, or of a father

[9] Although a mother is theoretically prohibited from indulging in sexual intercourse while she is still nursing an infant, not all mothers abide by this rule.

[10] The aged also form a group which properly belongs in the maturation hierarchy. They have been arbitrarily excluded from this study. Old age begins technically when a person has gone through the age-grade cycle first as an initiate and then as an initiator. This puts it at approximately fifty years.

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The rules of sexual etiquette regulating staring and indecorous postures hold in adulthood. The aged, however, need not be so careful in this respect. In particular, an aged man or woman may embrace when greeting a person of the opposite sex, behavior denied them since infancy. 834 885 888

The levirate operates when a woman's husband dies. Although not absolutely bound by this custom, the widow normally marries the oldest man of her husband's lineage and generation. If she chooses to marry someone else, the man whom she marries must pay a bride-price to her levirate inheritor. 587

When a woman dies, the following rules govern the behavior of her husband and relatives. If she dies shortly after she has married and before the bride-price has been paid, her husband need not pay for her. If he has already paid the bride-price, her relatives are obliged to return it in full or in part or else to provide another wife from their lineage. If her death was due to her husband's negligence, however, he must pay the bride-price and cannot demand compensation from her relatives. When a woman dies after she has borne children, her husband or her sons must pay a small amount of shell money to her brothers in order to maintain the mother's-brother-sister's-son relationship, a payment completely distinct from the bride-price transactions. If this payment is not made, the two kinship groups behave toward one another thenceforth as non-relatives. 768 583 [602]

A man may marry as many women as he can win and pay for. While I was at Kwoma, out of a population of approximately 375, one man had four wives, and two had three. The rest of the adult males had either two or one in about equal numbers; only the aged and recently widowed had none. 595

Soon after a man marries he must build a house of his own, as custom no longer permits him to escape wind and rain by living in his father's house. To do this he must first gather food for a work-bee feast, and then call on his relatives to help him. Since a feast must be prepared for each day's work, 591 342 476 [885]

tribes because War's wife had accused him of attempting to rape her. Had he stayed, War might have killed him. 000

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591 and since it is difficult to get helpers to leave their own work
342 for more than one day at a time, housebuilding is usually
476 slow. A year or more often elapses between setting the cen-
[351] tral post and lashing the final shingle in place. A young
[593] married man chooses a level plot near his father's house for a site. Sometimes two brothers will build a house together and share it, but more often each builds one of his own. Since the thatched houses at Kwoma do not last indefinitely, a man usually has to build several during the course of his lifetime.
[888] Old men live in their houses until these become too dilapidated to give adequate shelter, and then move in with one of their sons.

885 Toward dangers from the natural environment, the Kwoma
781 adult behaves in much the same way as he did during adoles-
[224] cence. He is somewhat more bold in coping with dangerous animals, particularly wild pigs, for he now begins to hunt them. He still respects supernatural dangers and heeds the warnings issued during the previous periods of his life concerning *marsalai*, ghosts, and sorcery.

885 As an adult, a man may come in closer contact with *mar-*
156 *salai* by joining the second stage of the yam cult. If he gains
794 enough prestige by aggressively defending his rights, if he
796 shows himself to be a good worker, if he becomes adept at
554 one of the ceremonial accomplishments such as singing, gong beating, flute playing, or dancing, if, in fine, he shows promise of becoming a "big older brother man," he will be asked to join the other section of the yam cult.[24] If he does so, the initiation ceremony is less formal than was his first entry into the house tamberan at adolescence. He learns definitely at this time that the opposite section is similar to his own, differing only in minor variations in ritual and paraphernalia. Thenceforth he has the privilege of attending either or both of the ceremonies, a gain in prestige, in rapport with the *marsalai*, and in opportunities for singing, dancing, and feasting.

[24] The yam cult, it will be remembered, is in two sections, *Yenama* and *Misjama*. Every male is elected into one or another of these sections during adolescence. If a boy enters *Yenama* during adolescence, the next step is to become a member of *Misjama*, and vice versa.